

7th Grade Retreat at St. James Cathedral



A few weeks ago, our 7th Grade Class had a retreat at St. James Cathedral in Seattle. There, we got the opportunity to take a tour of the Cathedral, watch a video about the differences between our lives and the homeless people's lives, and also, served dinner to the homeless people of Seattle. As for me, this experience opened my eyes to what community service really meant. At the St. James Cathedral, we took a detailed tour and learned many facts about the Church that you would have never guessed without taking the tour. Did you know that there once was a giant dome above the cathedral and that one day it collapsed into the building? Or that the huge doors in front of the cathedral are made entirely with bronze? Well that is just two of the many facts we learned.

Before serving dinner to the people in need, we watched a video of how the homeless people's lives are and what they think about the world. In the video a woman named Cheryl told us how most people think homeless people are just lazy and don't have jobs, but how actually most homeless people either have a low-paying job or can't have a job because they are mentally ill or disabled. She said that homeless people are just like us, but they need help.

What I thought was the most important part of retreat was being able to serve. Normally, the people eating at the Cathedral Kitchen would stand in line and would pick up their food like a lunch line. That day we treated them to a served meal like you would have at a restaurant. The homeless people we served were so grateful and pleased, it made me smile every time someone said thank you. One experience I had was when a lady I served told me how grateful she was for our service to the community. She also told me that she would pray for my family over the holiday. This was so nice to hear because I know she already has enough to worry about, and yet she still says she will pray for my family.

Since the holiday season was coming up when we served the homeless, we decided to raise money to make scarves for them. We sold baked goods at lunch and raised \$450.00 to buy the fabric. We made over 180 scarves for the homeless people to keep them warm and comfortable during the cold and rainy season. We also made holiday cards to put with each of the scarves we gave out. Though not all the scarves were given out that night, the rest were given out the next day.

I feel so blessed by this experience and being able to act as God's hands. Never before have I felt so appreciative for being able to make someone happy. I got to understand that even though the homeless people live differently than we are used to, they are still just people like us. I think it is important to try our best to make them feel that way too.

